Freight for salt transportion 904. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL: Will the Minister of

RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present rate of railway freight for salt transportation;

(b) whether Government is considering to reduce the freight as salt is basic and important product both for human consumption and as well as industrial use;

(c) whether there is any difference in freight rate between salt for human consumption and industrial use; and

(d) the freight rates during last four years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) At present the salt for transportation in train load is charged at Class 110 except for salt for industrial use which is charged at Class 120.

(b) Presently there is no such proposal under consideration.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) From 01.4.2004 to 31.3.2005 salt for industrial use was charged at Class 115. From 01.4.2005, it is charged at Class 120. Salt other than salt for industrial use was charged at Class 90 from 01.4.2004 to 14.1.2006. It was revised to Class 100 from 15.1.2006. It was further revised to Class 110 from 01.6.2006.

Gauge conversion of Ahmedabad-Udaipur rail line

905. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:
SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) when the work of gauge conversion between Ahmedabad and Udaipur would start;

(b) whether there is any provision in Railways' budgert for this project;

(c) whether it is possible to accord priority to this section by Railways; and

(d) whether it is possible to introduce Palace on Wheel type tourist attraction on this route to create a tourism circuit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Gauge conversion of Ahmedabad-Himmatnagar-Udaipur (299.30 km.) has been proposed in the Budget 2008-09 at an anticipated cost of Rs. 742.88 crore and an outlay of Rs. 1 lakh proposed for this work. Work would be taken up once the Budget is passed by the Parliament.

(c) The project will be progressed as per availability of resources with due consideration of its priority.

(d) Palace on Wheels type train is introduced at the instance of State Tourism Departments) concerned. The viability of the project as well as the circuit is initially examined by the State Government (s)/State Tourism Department (s). However, no such proposal in this regard has been received.